
Faribault, Minnesota Project: Community Image

Faribault Area Population: 30,000
Focus of Survey: Cross Section of Businesses
BR&E Drivers

- Chamber of Commerce
- University of MN Extension

Background

In 2002, after interviewing an impressive 91 business, the Faribault, Minnesota BR&E Task Force met to discuss data and establish priority projects. Community leaders and stakeholders identified five priority projects.

1. Identify the roles each agency has in economic development
2. Bring resources together for minority business prospects
3. Work to beautify the community gateways
4. Bring the business community into the city's comprehensive planning process
5. Improve the image of Faribault to both local residents and business prospects

Each of these priority projects had a team that developed a work plan and each has a story to tell. This case study focuses on priority project #5: community image.

One important finding from the survey was negative talk circulating about the community, particularly from the residents that had lived there the longest. Newcomers to the community, as well as those deeply involved in the community, saw positive aspects that longer-term residents did not.

The Image Committee was formed to address Faribault's image, accentuating the positive assets of Faribault and creating positive discussion within the community. The committee's first goal was to generate more positive discussion about Faribault. This would, hopefully, lead to accomplishment of a

long-term goal to create a positive image for Faribault. To begin addressing the short-term goal of generating positive discussion, the committee considered project suggestions from the University of Minnesota Extension, which were based on survey results.

The Project

The Image Committee started with the understanding that a local brand or community image should be unique, positive and locally believable. They began by interviewing market research firms and quickly learned that cost would be prohibitive. Deciding that the community residents must first embrace the marketing message, the committee decided to do its own market research by gathering positive comments about Faribault and compiling a database.

Faribaulta great place to work & live

10 Wonderful Things about Faribault!

- 1. Everyone is your neighbor**
 - 2. Small Town Atmosphere, big city opportunities**
 - 3. Multi-generational families**
 - 4. Dynamic Business Community**
 - 5. All the Festivals and Events**
 - 6. Diverse Cultural Community**
 - 7. Fabulous recreational Choices**
 - 8. Churches working together**
 - 9. Bountiful Educational Choices**
 - 10. Lakes and scenic beauty**
- OK eleven things, the proximity to the Twin Cities is a great asset too**
 - In fact, Faribault is within about an hour of most of Minnesota's top 10 tourist attractions**

The Image Committee used the local newspaper, radio, community events, and the County Fair to collect from residents “One Wonderful Thing” they could identify about Faribault. After hundreds of entries were collected, the Committee compiled the data and came up with the “Top Ten Wonderful Things about Faribault.” With this list, the committee worked with “Faribault’s Future” a local community leadership group to produce refrigerator magnets that were given out all over town for months thereafter. Magnets were sent to all Chamber members, made available through city hall and the schools and distributed by members of the community leadership program.

Armed with these positive messages, the Image Committee set out to build on the “Top Ten” to achieve the long-term goal of developing a community image campaign. Initially, the Image Committee planned to hire an advertising agency to develop a marketing style for the community. But the price tag again forced the committee to be inventive. They reviewed the research they’d gathered themselves, and together they hammered out a fitting slogan: *Faribault: Small Town Pride, Big City Opportunities.*



The first use of this slogan was in banners that were funded by the city of Faribault and hung throughout the downtown and main corridors of Faribault.

The committee then began to work on a DVD that would show in photos and narration the wonderful things about Faribault. Work on this project went well, however the committee soon realized the value of working with professional producers for the DVD and accompanying print materials.

With this new slogan already in place, and an amateur version of the DVD to show, the committee raised the money needed to retain Clearsite New Media, a local firm with expertise in video production, photography, graphic design and web development.

Challenges

The committee embraced all of its challenges, including the challenge of raising money and getting community buy-in, by "rolling up their sleeves". For example, instead of relying on a public relations firm or advertising agency – admittedly the easier



option – the initial research and slogan development was done locally. The task force realized in many instances that the easier option required more cash. The timeline was also a challenge, taking many months to accomplish through volunteers what a marketing research firm might have done in weeks. The end result however is a true community project that has buy-in from many community groups.

Resources

The Image Project, printed marketing materials, production of the DVD, etc., required around \$50,000. With the initial research, the resulting slogan and first DVD presentation, the committee was able to raise this money from the City of Faribault Economic Development Authority, the Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce and Faribault Industrial Corporation. (These were the same organizations that funded the original BR&E program.) The Chamber of Commerce supplied the staff necessary to carry out the project. A local marketing firm provided initial drafts of the project so that the committee would be able to show the prospective financial supporters what would result from their investment. One of the members of the Image Committee was able to provide the voice-over for the DVD, saving about \$8,000 on production costs. Many community members contributed photographs and a team including a local writer and city council member wrote the DVD script. Faribault's Future Leadership Program stayed

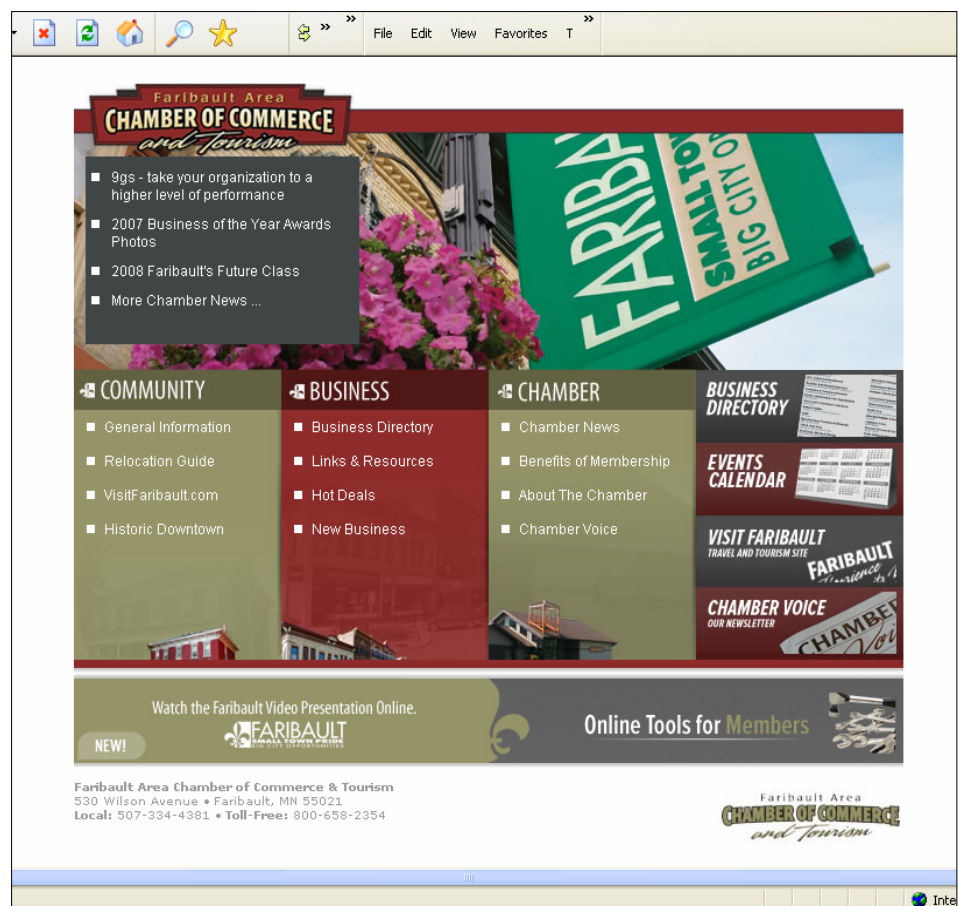


connected to the project and made presentations to local service clubs and organizations to gain additional support for the concept.

Results

The Image Committee is proud to have facilitated this branding project for Faribault. It started with the banners hung on city streets as well as the use of the “Small Town Pride Big City Opportunity” logo in city, and chamber publications. The project now has community groups and businesses adding this positive message to their own marketing and advertising. The marketing materials produced include

a community brochure and DVD, a portfolio, a new website for the EDA, a new Chamber website and resource book, city map, and visitors guide all bearing the same branded images. Additional plans are underway to expand the image to postcards and billboards. An audio jingle is being prepared using the “Small Town Pride Big City

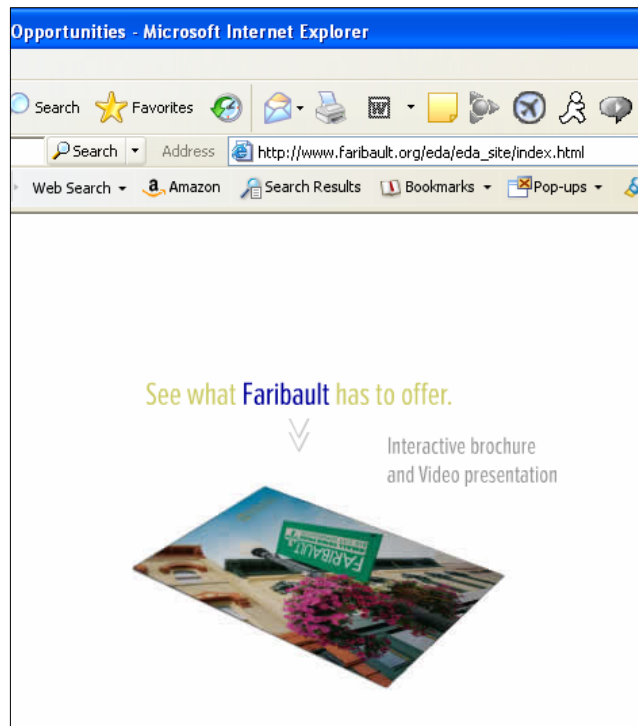


Opportunities” slogan, for use by the city and the chamber in radio and TV ads and messages. This audio image will also be usable on phone systems “on-hold” messages.

Another indicator of success for the Image Committee and for the entire BR&E program has been the level of community involvement.

When asked if the project was worth the time and money, Faribault Chamber of Commerce

President¹ responded, “The effort of establishing a brand image that has been used by so many in the community was a great experience with fantastic results.



While some communities have spent \$100,000 - \$200,000 to research and develop a brand, we brought the resources of the community together. The finances, talent and passion resulted in an award winning branding campaign that sends a compelling message about our great city!”

One large company considering locating in Faribault was shown the DVD early on. They later reported that the DVD was definitely a factor in their final decision to locate in Faribault. It had provided them an

understanding and knowledge of the community that would have been hard to attain otherwise. They also reported that it appeared that the community had its act together and were all singing the same song. That is just the reaction the Image Committee hoped for.

In 2003, Faribault won the Community Award presented by Business Retention and Expansion International. In 2006 the Marketing Campaign developed by the Image Committee won the EDIE award; a statewide award for community marketing materials presented by EDAM (Economic Development Association of Minnesota). Specifically the judges noted the high level of community collaboration.

¹Much thanks to Kymn Anderson for providing us several interviews and photographs for the project.

Additional Information

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